



CITY OF ABSECON
Municipal Complex
500 Mill Road
Absecon, New Jersey 08201

Carie A. Crone, RMC
Municipal Clerk

CITY COUNCIL

AUGUST 20, 2020

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

THIS MEETING WAS HELD AS A ZOOM MEETING.

The meeting was called to order by Council President Keith Bennett at 5:00 p.m.

FLAG SALUTE

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Butch Burroughs, Sandy Cain, Caleb Cavalier, Betty Howell, Steve Light, Frank Phillips, Keith Bennett

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Horton, Fred Scerni, Jessica Thompson, Julianne Cannuscio

PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT ON THE SUNSHINE LAW
NOTIFICATION THAT THIS MEETING IS ELECTRONICALLY RECORDED

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

PRESENTATION – Jim Eberwine, Emergency Management Coordinator – spoke about the recent storm that we had and the damage that occurred. He explained how AC Electric handled the outages. This storm was similar to the one that happened in 2012. There were no injuries or deaths thank god and there is a lot of debris still out there that the ACUA are still handling. Pertaining to the COVID virus, he stated some stats in Atlantic County. First responders have done a stellar job during all of these circumstances. It won't be easy with school starting and the voting in November. Hurricane season is not over and we could get another one. He asked the residents to keep safe and respect each other. He thanked Lloyd Jones and his department for their nonstop efforts in cleaning up the waste.

Keith – thanked all of our departments as well and we are grateful there were no injuries or deaths.

PRESENTATION – Rick Dovey, President of the ACUA – he first apologized to everyone for the slow and inconsistent recovery efforts. As Jim said, it was a county wide event and we serve Absecon and other towns for trash, recycling and yard waste. They prioritize all the pickups and this storm caused a tremendous amount of yard waste and debris. We could never use our normal schedule and the amount of trucks for a normal pickup schedule. They know they are behind. He was contacted by Kim and Jessica and was made aware of unacceptable level of service. He indicated he would get a game plan to catch up in Absecon. This afternoon 5 crews came and are still working to catch up. Tomorrow they will be back. On the weekend, they offered overtime hours to hopefully finish up. By next week, hopefully the normal yard waste will be back on schedule.

Keith – asked if they were supposed to be out additional days right after the storm

Rick – he is unhappy about the level of communication in their office and there were inconsistent messages given to people. They are working on that problem now and staffing has been an issue.

Steve – applauded his company for the work they do. He has seen the work in person that they do and they do a great job. Next time, we should think of ways to work with you to help out because it's a large undertaking for the ACUA to take on all by themselves.

2020 ORDINANCE FOR INTRODUCTION

- 08** An ordinance of the City of Absecon Repealing and Replacing Chapter 251 of the Code of the City of Absecon Entitled "Rental Housing"

Motion to introduce – Councilman Light – second – Councilman Cavileer

Keith – he received a letter from a resident who sat on the ad hoc committee we had and he made a good point. He then referred to page 11 section B3 regarding violations. The suggestion would be to lessen the number of complaints from 4 down to 3 complaints and lessen the time frame from 24 months to 12 months. The reason being the term of the license is one year and it would coincide with each other. It would make the owners more vigilant on dealing with anything. He likes the idea. This is actually coming from an Air BNB owner.

Sandy – she heard that Air BNB is cracking down on the owners and they can be told that they can't advertise on their website any more.

Fred – can change it to 3 in 12 months or 4 in 24 months. It will be up to council and how they want to introduce it tonight. He will change the ordinance and when it comes back in two weeks, the new language will be in it.

The consensus was they all agreed to change it to this.

Jessica – got a suggestion for a minor change in the definitions. The definition of the word "realtor" is used and should be replaced with "real estate licensees". Fred read the definition and said it already says that. This would go into effect immediately once it's finally passed.

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; Howell, yes; Light, yes; Phillips, yes; Bennett, yes

RESOLUTION

- 91** Authorizing the City to award a contract for the Reconstruction of Bayview Drive.

Jessica – the bids were opened on Tuesday and we got one bid, which was Asphalt Paving Systems and within our budget and includes everything we want completed. They have done most of our road programs in town.

PUBLIC PORTION (Agenda Items only)

Motion to open to the public – Councilwoman Howell – second – Councilwoman Cain
All were in favor. No comments.

Motion to close public – Councilwoman Howell – second – Councilman Burroughs
All were in favor.

Motion to move Res. #91-2020 – Councilman Cavileer – second – Councilwoman Cain

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; Howell, yes; Light, yes; Phillips, yes; Bennett, yes

APPROVAL OF BILL LIST – \$2,172,900.13

Motion to approve – Councilman Cavileer – second – Councilman Burroughs

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; Howell, yes; Light, yes; Phillips, yes; Bennett, yes

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting Minutes – 8/6/2020

Motion to approve – Councilman Burroughs - second – Councilman Cavileer

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; Howell, yes; Light, yes; Phillips, abstain; Bennett, abstain

REPORTS

Public Safety – Frank – have had no meetings. The fire chief has spoken to him and they've had many more calls and in desperate need of a new truck. It's been talked about for 5 years or so and he thinks it should just go to the finance committee. It takes a year to build them and get them delivered.

Betty – it's inevitable that they need a new truck. It's not a surprise to anyone sitting here. To the taxpayers, we are not favoring them, but they are old. We can start the process now, but it won't come in for a year. Asked Jessica since the rate is down, will that help with the cost of it?

Jessica – the rates come into play when you are actually borrowing the funds. If you want to make a capital purchase that you didn't budget for, the budget must include a 5% down payment and an ordinance done. It's not like putting something on a credit card and paying for it later. We are not set up in this year's budget to make another capital purchase.

Sandy – remembers the study that was done suggested a different truck be replaced and not the want they are requesting. Is that correct?

Keith – he was going to suggest that the committees start having meetings since we can meet now

Steve – we were all in agreement when the firehouse was being built, that we would wait until it was completed so we would have all the figures in. He agrees to what they need, but we have to be fiscally sound before making another large purchase.

Frank – he understands all that, but he is being told that all of their trucks are not in shape to run and are in desperate need. He was asked to move this along now. It's hard to get parts for this truck now. They already have one picked out and submitted the estimate. He doesn't think there is a need for another meeting with the fire department to discuss it.

Betty – it's a 2 year purchase, so we should start on it. It might have to be in December for next year's budget. She sees where Frank is coming from though. It's on our schedule as September 14th at 6:00 p.m. for a Public Safety meeting, so she thinks we should have one anyway to discuss another matter that came up.

Chief Laughlin – he suggested that the fire department look into how long it will actually take to get a new one. Due to COVID, things are taking longer. We ordered our cars early and we are getting them in November. He understands everyone is upset about our debris in town, but it's important we all work together and be patient. Rick does a great job at the ACUA and they will get it cleaned up and it won't happen right away. We are in a pandemic and a heat wave as well. Our Public Works department does a great job as well. Thanked Jim for giving his presentation tonight.

Public Works - Burroughs – re-emphasized what the Chief said about having patience regarding the debris removal. Everyone is doing the best they can.

Economic Development – Betty – the Planning Board meeting was rescheduled from 8/12 to 8/26 at 7:00 p.m. There will be a small committee to plan something for 9/11. We don't want to forget that day. The checks have been returned to the Creek Fest vendors and the bands notified about next year. Thanked Caleb and the Mayor for helping her out a resident who was overwhelmed everything going on. They went to their property and helped cleaned up a bit. Reminded everyone to do the same to their neighbors.

Finance – Cavileer – we will have a meeting next month. Asked everyone to go to our website and click on the bike/walk site and take a survey. It will help us to pursue grants for projects in town to create more routes to get around. The project along Pitney Road and Connecticut Avenue looks great and they are trying to complete it before school starts. He is happy with introducing Ord. 8 tonight and was happy to be on the ad hoc committee. Hopefully it will make everyone happy.

Parks & Playgrounds – Light – the last concert will be Sunday and the residents have appreciated us moving forward with them this year. The turnout is pretty good as well. He was in attendance when a high school student gathered 1000 pieces of clothing to donate to the veterans. He's getting positive feedback on the sidewalks that are getting installed along Pitney Road. The American Legion Clam Bake will be 8/29 from 4 to 7:00 p.m. The painters' union will be donating their time to paint their building sometime in the fall to go along with the firehouse, so it looks like a complex.

Keith – said there is an issue with the football fields again. We are having a professional service coming out to fertilize and keep up on it, but it looks like it did three years ago before we did the new one. There is so much crabgrass on it. Is there something we can do?

Jessica – Lloyd has looked into it and there was an application put on that takes a little bit longer, but he is keeping in touch with the company that did it. It's a type of grass that doesn't respond to the normal spraying.

Steve – said that he takes care of his lawn and the crabgrass is awful this year. He also has spoken to a landscaper and he said this is a year for higher crabgrass growing. It's not just our city, but all over.

Community Affairs – Cain – NJ normally has a run, where active military runners stop every so often at markers set out for a fallen soldier. There is one on Shore Road and they will be doing it September 25, 26 & 27. Instead of runners, there will be a motorcade of some sort. Her next meeting will be held on September 2nd at 5:00 p.m. for the ad hoc and 6:00 will be the regular one.

PUBLIC PORTION

Motion to open to the public was made by Councilman Light – second – Councilwoman Howell
All were in favor.

Erik Conover – thanked Frank for helping out the fire department in getting a new truck

Sandy Hickerson – thanked the ACUA and Public Works for all their hard work picking up her yard waste

Dale Conover – also thanked Frank for his comments on the fire trucks

Jessica – Sandy Hickerson had asked if we were going to follow up on the 2nd amendment resolution that was requested in February and hope they move on and pass it.

Betty – we did meet about and our attorney drafted a resolution and then the virus shut everything down. It will go back to the Public Safety meeting for discussion and then back to Council.

Motion to close public – Councilman Light – second – Councilman Cavileer
All were in favor.

Jessica – thanked Rick for making time to come tonight and speak to us. We have been in contact with them all along after the storm to get our debris picked up. She thanked the Public Works, the Police Department and everybody who has been trying to help out in getting the city back to normal. Thanked all the residents who have worked on their properties in getting their debris out in the proper manner; it's a lot of work. The city offers many services that are included in our tax bills, which other towns don't offer. She reminded everyone that the tax bills are due August 28th.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Tax Collection - \$1,432,780.40

Clerk's Office - \$24,694.70

Municipal Court - \$7,155.81

Construction Office - \$15,226.00

Mayor – the library hours are changed to 9 to 5 now. She thanked residents for cleaning up their properties. For the next two Saturdays, residents can drop off storm debris only at the Public Works building. Ordinance 134-8 says, if a tree goes down on your property, you are responsible for taking care of it.

CLOSED SESSION

Res. #92 – CLOSED SESSION

Motion to enter closed – Councilman Light – second – Councilman Cavileer
All were in favor.

Fred – stated the reason for closed session as contract negotiations/agreement. There will only be discussion. No action would be taken tonight.

Fred – it's now 7:03 pm and we are back in open session. In executive session, Council discussed certain contract issues which would be impacted by the realignment of the Municipal Court and certain shared services of the courts within Atlantic County. Council has decided not to take any action on this matter at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn – Councilman Light – second – Councilwoman Cain
All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,


Carrie A. Crone, City Clerk

Approved: 9-3-2020